

"AN EASTER LILY"

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

NIL DESPERANDUM

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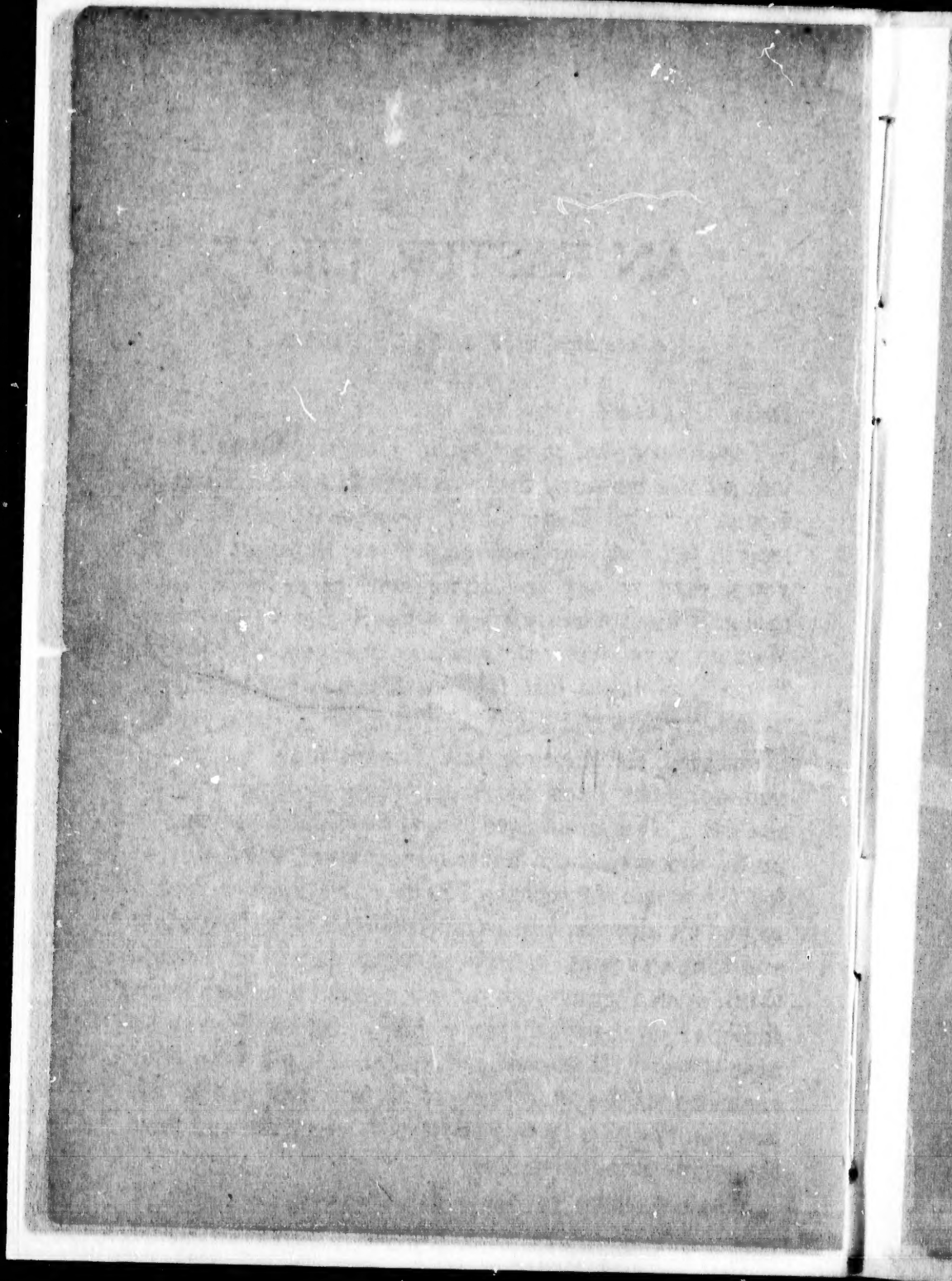
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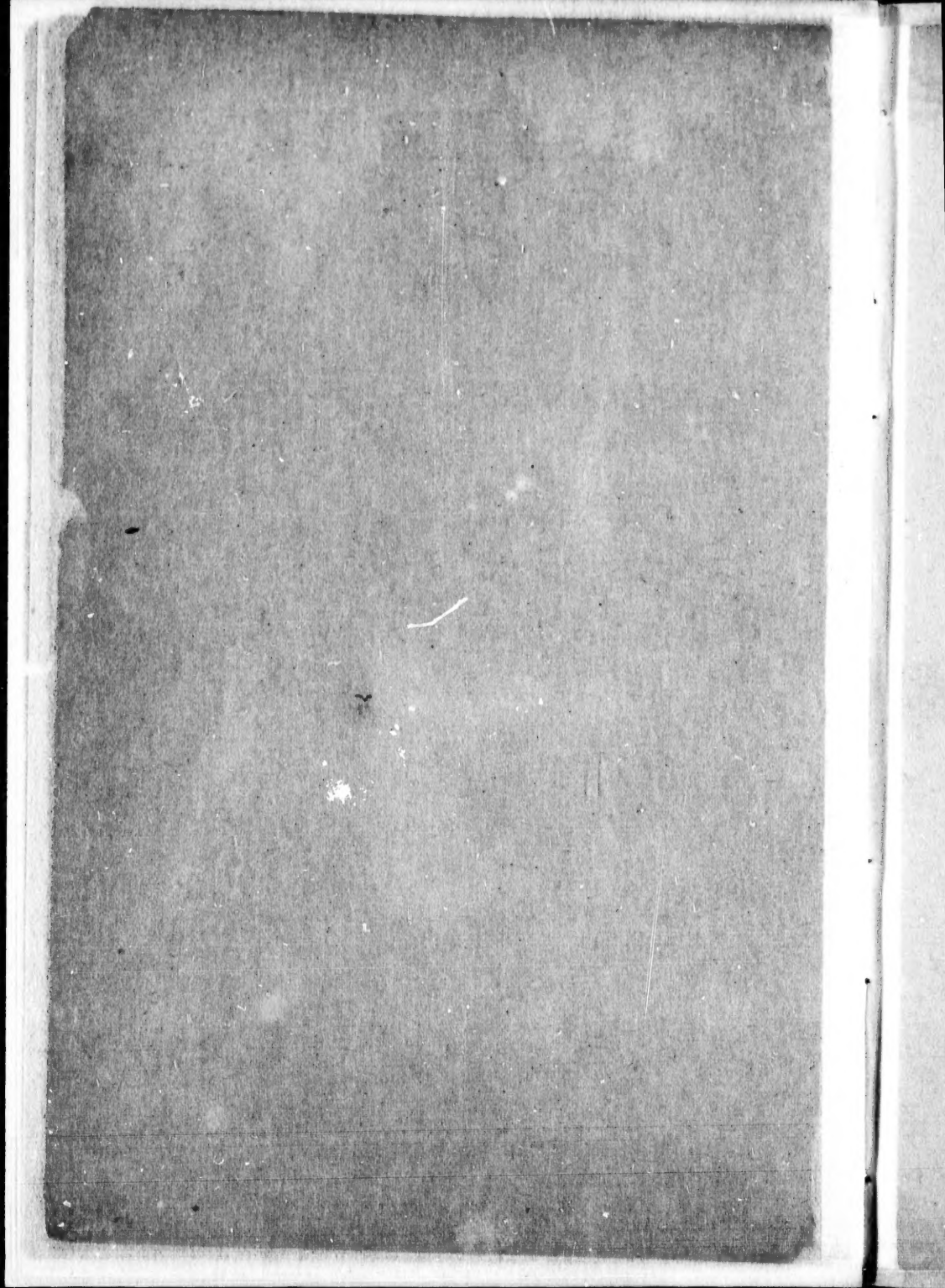
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS
Respectfully and Lovingly Dedicated
TO
REV. ISABELLA M. STEWART
AND
JOHN H. STEWART.

As in the garden of our thought
Choice flowers are fast appearing.
Our gratitude flows out to those
Who did the first rough clearing.

NIL DESPERANDUM.



"AN EASTER LILY"



"AN EASTER LILY"

A STORY FOR LITTLE GIRLS.

DEAR GRANDMA,

I was very glad to get your nice long letter, but just a little bit sorry that you asked me what Mamma meant by "Our Easter Lily," because it will take so long to tell you that perhaps it would be better to send you a card to say the letter will come some day, though I don't exactly know when. But I'll see what Mamma says about that when she comes upstairs. When you wrote last fall for Mamma to come over in the big ship and stay with you for a little while, I was glad, for Mamma said I could take her place, and look after Papa and keep things in order just as she did. It seemed good fun at first and Papa said I really was a splendid housekeeper, and I think so, too, for the whole six months I kept house I never forgot to put his slippers and papers ready, except just once, and that was such a very exciting day that I don't think even a grown-up person could have helped it, though I must say it was a pity, because it was so near the end. It seemed rather like doing a sum. You count up all the long rows of figures, and just at the last you find you have forgotten to carry one and then the whole thing is spoiled.

When it came so near to Christmas, Papa and I

were a little surprised that you wrote for Mamma to stay till after New Year's, though I don't wonder that you wanted her, for she is a very dear, sweet Mamma and she looks so pretty when she kisses you "good-night," and says, "Go to sleep, darling," but we really did not expect that you would have kept her all the time till Easter. Still, we are not the least bit vexed about it now we have her back again, so you need not even feel sorry. I would very much like to tell you how we spent every day, I mean how Jennie, the cook, and Bella, who used to be my nurse when I was a little girl, (I am eight and a half now) and myself the housekeeper, spent the days, but I am afraid it would take too much time, and, besides, sometimes one day seemed very much like another. So I will do what I once wanted to do with my story book, skip to the interesting part, and I am sure you will like that very much. I expect Mamma told you that our house is quite a long way out of the city, and is in the middle of some, I forget how many, acres of land. There are no other houses anywhere near, except a cottage where the gardener generally lives. It was empty nearly all the winter because Bob slept in the house. A little while before Mamma came back Papa got a new gardener with a family, and they all came to live in the cottage.

First I must tell you that every Sunday Papa and I drove over to the church, and as the Sunday-school was right after Papa waited about and talked, I don't know what about, the weather very likely ; people always talk about the weather, don't they ? Papa often

told me that I must put my Sunday lesson into practice in the week, and then I should be ready for the next one. Really and truly, Grandmamma, I did try, but I did not seem to know how till just the last Sunday before Mamma came back, and then the lesson was so plain that I think even a baby of five could understand it. It was all about "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and "All men are brethren." As we were going home, I asked Papa if those words meant just what they said, and he said "Yes, because God is the Father of all."

That was good news to me. It made me very happy because I had so often wanted to have a sister to play with me, so when I began to think how many sisters there are of mine in the world, I felt quite sure that if I asked my Father God He would certainly let me have one of them to come and live with me, for it says in the Bible, "Ask and ye *shall* receive." So I asked for a dear little sister.

In the morning I got up very happy—you see there really were so many things to be glad about; first, everybody is so kind, then the spring was so soft and warm, and I was to have a sister to live with me, and best of all, Mamma was coming home, and I was going over that very day to visit my neighbors at the cottage; so I don't wonder at Papa saying when he kissed me good-bye, "You seem a very happy little girl."

As soon as I could, I picked a large bunch of flowers from the hothouse, to take to the cottage. It seemed quite a long while till half-past ten o'clock, but Bella said it would not be manners to go any sooner. Bella,

you know, is very particular about manners, and styles, and effects. She used to keep me standing quite a long time when I had a new dress or coat, "to see the effect," she said.

But at last I was able to go, and when I opened the door I saw, what do you think? Such a surprise! One of my brothers (for of course all the boys are my brothers) sitting on the last step. He started up when he saw me and moved as though he would go away. So I said, "What are you going away for, don't you like me?" For he really did not look a bit glad to see me; perhaps that was my fancy, for of course he would be glad to see his sister. Then he turned round, and do you know, Grandma, if I had not known for certain that boys never do cry, I should have thought he had been crying. I hardly knew what to say, as he did not speak. So I just gave him some of my flowers, and we were both very quiet for a minute. Then I asked him where he was going, and he said he really did not know, for he had come a long, long way in the cars to find a friend of his father's, and as this friend had moved away he had no work to do, and no money to pay his way back where he came from. I asked him if he had told God all about it, to know what he had better do, and he said he had not thought about it and he was not quite sure that God would hear him if he did ask.

I told him I was quite sure God would hear him and let him know what he was to do; because God always gives us everything we need. Then he said that perhaps if I asked it would be all right, but that did not

seem nice to me, as though God heard one and not another ; so we agreed we would ask together. We just said, "Dear Father, God, will you please tell this boy of yours where you want him to work to-day, and make it plain, because he has tried quite a long while," and then I asked my brother if he would like some of the money I had upstairs in my drawer, but he smiled and said, "No thank you, little sister, I feel sure I shall get the work, so I will just keep the flowers ; good-bye and thank you," and he lifted his cap and went away.

After leaving my brother, I went over to the cottage. The door was open and just inside I found the dearest little baby girl playing with some blocks. When she saw the flowers she tried so hard to reach them that she upset the chair that was keeping her in, and made such a noise that her mother came to see what was the matter. She was so surprised to see me that I told her I was her nearest, nearest neighbor and had come to call on her.

Then she asked me into the parlor and called her little boy Robbie to see me, and told me all about the big ship in which they had just come over the sea, and lots of nice things that would take too long to tell you. But now the best part of all is coming. Bobbie was looking out of the window, when he suddenly cried out, "Mamma, I going out to meet Lily !" So I looked out too and saw a little girl who was coming across the field. I asked if that was Robbie's sister, but Mrs. Denver said, "No, it is only a little girl we brought over to get adopted, because she had no friends to take care of her." I felt quite sure the moment I

saw her that she was the sister God meant me to have, and I expect that's just the way God manages. He let Papa have more money and a larger house than we needed, so that there would be room for any little boy or girl who could not very well take care of themselves. I was so very, very glad to see my sister that I ran out to meet her, and kissed her so many times that she hardly knew what to do. Then I asked her if she would like to come over and look at the dolls and toys at my home, and Mrs. Denver said she could, if she did not stay too long. So we took Robbie with us, and went home. I don't think I could tell you just how Lily looks, if I tried ever so hard, but she makes everyone think of a white lily. I expect that is why they gave her that name. We went up to the nursery and turned out all the toys, and everything that looked a bit like a boy's toy we gave to Robbie. He is quite a nice boy, too, for he played with the dolls, and took them out in their carriage.

After lunch Bella thought Robbie had better go home, but she said she would ask if Lily could stay till Papa came home, because she liked Lily very much, and told me she would like her to stay all the time. I asked Lily where she lived before she came over with Mrs. Denver. She said she used to sell flowers in the daytime and sleep in a big room with lots of other children at night, and one day the flowers were costing quite a good deal because there were so few of them; she was standing at the corner of a street by a large store. It was just beginning to grow dark, and it seemed as though people didn't love flowers a bit—for

nobody bought them—when a lady came round the corner (Lily said she looked so kind that she ran up to her and said, "Will you please buy some flowers?"), and the lady turned round and smiled at her as though she loved her, so that Lily says she feels happy every time she thinks of it, and the lady said, "Indeed I will, my dear little girl," and she gave Lily more money than she had ever had before, and asked her where she lived and who her friends were; and when Lily told her, she said, "This is just the very piece of work I should like best, and to think I have to leave the city in half-an-hour." Then she took a little book out of her pocket and gave it to Lily, saying, "Read this, dear, it will tell you all about the dear Father who loves and cares for all His little ones, and He *will* find you a proper home and kind friends, and then she stooped down and kissed Lily two or three times and went to a carriage that was waiting close by. When Lily got back to her room that night she sat down close under the light to see what the wonderful book said about "our Father," and she says that when she read all the promises God had made she felt sure that she did not have to go about with hardly any clothes and no home to live in, because you see God would not have such a lot of little girls and boys if He could not afford to keep them, and it would seem as though God must be very poor if he could not give His children enough clothes to wear. And then Lily read about how God clothes the other kind of lilies and takes care of the sparrows, and she knew that God would love her all the time.

The very next day Mrs. Denver met Lily in the street and asked her if she could come and mind the baby for her, and when she found Lily had no particular home, she said it would be better for Lily to stay with them till she found one. So Lily stayed all the winter with them, and they were all very happy, and when Mr. Denver thought they would do better in Canada, they asked Lily if she would like to come out with them and get adopted, and, of course, God meant them to bring her to us because she could not have come by herself, and I do think, Grandma, Lily and I had the very happiest time that afternoon. I got out all the pretty dresses Mamma had made for me, and we found they just fitted Lily, and I gave them and every other thing to her; 'because, you see, they really belong to her as much as to me, for we are sisters, and do you know, Grandma, I never knew before how beautiful it is to have something to give and someone to give it to. But Lily would not have them all; she said she wanted me to have half because I was her sister and she loved me, so we divided up. Just as we had everything nicely settled Bella came back, and though I am very sorry to have to say so, I really am just a little bit disappointed in Bella, for when she saw all the clothes on the floor she said, "Pansy, you cannot give away your clothes like this, you should have asked me first!" Now, you remember I told you that Mamma left me to keep house and do as she would do, and though I had many times seen Mamma take out her dresses and give them away, she never once asked Bella if she might. Just at that moment

we heard a step in the hall, and the door opened and Papa came in: "Pansy, I've a letter from Mamma and she really will"—and Papa stopped. He was so glad to see Lily, I think, that he forgot what he had to say. Lily looked so pretty, too; she had on a white silk dress that Mamma gave me just before she went away, with pink ribbon on it, and she has such pretty golden curls, that it's no wonder Papa was a little surprised. "Why, where did this little girl come from?" he asked, after looking at us both for a moment. So I told Papa that I had asked God to give me a sister, and that when I went to see my neighbors I had found her. I asked Papa if he didn't think God was very kind to answer so quickly. Papa didn't answer for a minute, he went and looked out of the window; I don't see now what he was looking at so long, for there is nothing very pretty that side of the house. Then Papa came and sat down on the floor beside us and asked Bella and Lily quite a lot of questions, and when they were all answered, he asked Lily if she would like to come and live with us and be my sister, and, of course, Lily said "Yes," because, you see, we were sisters anyhow, and sisters always like to be together. So Papa gave us each a kiss and said he would go over to the cottage and see if Lily could stay all night. I remembered he had not told us about Mamma's letter. The letter was to say that she would be home in good time for Easter Sunday, but as the ship was to come to New York, Papa said he would have to leave on Thursday night and then he and Mamma would both be back by Saturday morning. Papa went over to the cottage

and stayed quite a long time, and Lily and I got dressed for dinner. Bella set an extra place at the table, and I'm sure Papa was very glad that night to have two little girls instead of one. I don't think I'll try to tell you of all the good times Lily and I had the next few days. I really did not think that two little girls could have so much to say to each other, but I expect it was because Papa gave us \$5.00 each to buy Easter presents and we had to drive into town to buy them. We gave Robbie a whole soldier's suit and the baby a doll that she could not possibly break, though she has a way of dragging it across the floor by its hair that I should not care for.

Before Papa went away Bella asked him if she could buy the silk and have a dress like mine for Lily; she thought it would have such a pretty effect for us to be dressed alike for Easter.

I don't really think Papa cares very much about effects and styles, but he told Bella she might get whatever she needed. So Bella went to town early the next morning, and worked ever so hard to get it done. I know she was glad when the telegram came to say that Papa and Mamma could not get here till Saturday night.

Bella had the dinner all set so prettily, with Easter lilies all about the room, and the first spring violets she could get, with some sweet peas and yellow roses; she took these from the hothouse. We expected Papa and Mamma about eight, but at half-past six Bella began to dress us. It seemed to take a very long time that night, and Bella tied and untied our sashes

ever so many times before she could get them right. Then she gave us each a beautiful Easter lily, and said, when we heard the door open, we were to go very slowly and quietly to meet Papa and Mamma; and on no account to run, because if we did we should spoil the whole effect. We both promised to do our very best. I really don't think Bella knew how very, *very*, *very* much I wanted to see Mamma again. But she had taken so much trouble with our dresses that I suppose she did want Mamma to see them looking nice. At last we heard the carriage coming up the drive, and I could hardly keep still, but Lily said we had better stay where we were as we had promised, so when we heard the front door open we went just as slowly as we could, and I really believe I should have been all right if Lily had not dropped my hand and her lily, and run across the room crying out, "It's my own dear lady, the very one," and then Mamma put out her arm and drew Lily to her, so I could not wait any longer, but ran, too, and Mamma put out her other arm for me, and kissed us both.

Do you know, Grandma, I don't believe there ever was such a lot of talking done as there was that night. Mamma and Lily and I were all so glad to see each other, and Mamma said that having Lily to care for was just the work she most wanted to do. Nobody wanted to go to bed. The next morning was Easter Sunday. It was such a beautiful day; directly after breakfast we gave each other the presents. Mamma could not give us all she had for us, because her trunks were still at the depot, but she was very pleased with the

box of perfume that Lily gave her, and the handkerchiefs from me.

Then we drove to church—all four of us, and I think that was the very happiest Easter I ever knew. When we got into church there was another very great surprise. In our pew was a boy, the very brother I told you about, and Mamma shook hands with him, and then the service began, so we could not talk any more. Everybody was very happy in church that day, and when the organ was played you could almost hear it say "Glad, glad, glad," and I thought how kind God was to give us everything and make us so happy.

After church there were five of us to get into the carriage, for our brother came, too, and Papa told us that he was the very friend whom Nelson wanted to find, and you see God did answer his prayer. After that Nelson worked in Papa's office, and lived with us. So it is no wonder Papa and Mamma and I are so happy when we have a brother and sister we didn't expect.

And now, dear Grandma, I do believe this is the very longest letter you have ever had, and perhaps it will make you careful what kind of questions you ask after this. To you this may seem as though it was written right off, but it is not, and I am afraid it will be very nearly Christmas before you get it, for I have only written one page each day.

Now, I think I will say good-bye. Nelson and Lily are both close by, and they have read every word, and send you kisses and love, and please take the same from

Your loving

PANSY.

AN ALLEGORY.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

Down came the rain in a straight, steady, decided way, as though it would say "Yes, here I am, and here I mean to stay." At least, so it seemed to the three children who stood looking out of the sitting-room window, with anything but satisfaction on their faces. This day had been set apart for a visit to the woods. Everything was ready, lunch baskets packed, Jack had his fishing pole, Gordon his new sail boat, Isabel her doll, so daintily dressed, too, in a fresh white dress, and new ribbons in her straw hat. To be sure, William (the man who worked around for Aunt Mary, at whose house they were visiting) had told them when they first got up that he was sure there would be rain somewhere before long. But they had paid no attention to this, because they thought he was not a good judge, as Jack and Gordon had been in and out ever since breakfast, and come back with glowing reports of certain bits of blue under the grey clouds, and the comforting assurance that it "wouldn't rain a drop this day." But in spite of all the rain had come, and with it ended the hope of the pic-nic.

For a few minutes they were all silent, then Jack, who generally saw the comical side of things, began to sing :

"We are playing together,
We are happy and glad,
We don't care for the weather,
And we never grow sad."

"Don't we care for it, though," said Aunt Mary, who had just come into the room, "but perhaps, children, it may clear up by dinner time."

"Why, Auntie, you are n-i-c-e!" cried Gordon, who had lately begun to read and write, and often spelled part of his sentences, most likely to help those less well informed.

Jack glanced out of the window once more, and turned round with a beaming face. "Auntie," he cried, "there is Uncle Dave coming up the path."

That Uncle Dave was a favorite was evident by the sudden rush to the door, as each tried to be the first to welcome the tall figure in the wet coat who stood in the hall by this time.

"Oh, Uncle Dave, you've come just at the right time," said Jack, as he took the umbrella.

"I thought I should find you in," replied Uncle Dave, "and as I have a few hours to spare, I took this chance to see you before you go home."

A few moments later Uncle was seated in a big arm chair, with Isabel and her doll on his knee, and Jack and Gordon on either side of his chair.

"Of course you have a story ready?" said Jack. "It's nearly four months since we saw you, so you have had plenty of time to make one 'up.'"

"I've been far too busy to write stories," replied Uncle Dave, "but I believe I do know a short one that will just do for this morning."

"Once upon a time," began Uncle Dave, in good old-fashioned style, "there lived a little German boy called Hans. His home was in a very beautiful part of the country, and the house was surrounded by green lawns and flower-beds. There were hammocks and swings, summer-houses and fountains, and everything else that one could wish for. Inside the house Hans had one room that was filled with beautiful presents that his father and mother were always sending him, for his parents were often away from home many months at a time, and as they did not stay long in one place, they could not take their little boy with them. Hans had a tutor who taught him and read to him, and sometimes took him for long drives, for Hans was not allowed to go out of the castle grounds by himself. But Hans was not happy—he wanted something, but he was not sure what it was. Sometimes he thought of something he fancied would give him pleasure, and wrote to his parents for it, but soon after it came he would grow tired and put it away with his unused gifts. One day as he was waiting at the open gate for the carriage to come, he saw under a tree, a little way off, a stranger fast asleep, with a big straw hat over his eyes.

"It was so seldom Hans saw anyone outside his own household that he took a few steps toward the tree to see better what the stranger was like, and then started back again, for the straw hat moved, and its owner sat up and looked at him.

"The stranger had a very beautiful face; and as his dark eyes, full of gentleness and love, were fixed in-

quiringly on him, Hans forgot his shyness, and went straight to him.

"‘You live in a very beautiful place, little boy,’ he gently said, ‘and yet you look as though you wanted something.’

"‘That’s quite true, sir,’ replied Hans; ‘but I cannot find out what it is that I do want, for I have a whole roomful of beautiful presents, and they don’t make me happy.’

"The stranger thought for a few moments, then he said: ‘I think I know what would make you happy; but it is a very valuable gift, and I should want a great deal for it.’

"‘What do you want, sir?’ said Hans eagerly.

"‘I want all the things that are in your storeroom,’ replied the stranger.

"Hans’ face fell; he thought that was a great deal to ask, and his treasures grew more precious now that there was the chance of losing them. ‘What is the gift?’ he asked at length. ‘I should like to see if it is worth all these things.’

"‘The stranger shook his head. ‘You will have to take my word for it,’ he said; ‘for there is nowhere to put it till that room is empty.’

"‘There are plenty of other rooms in the house,’ said Hans; ‘and I should love to see it.’

"‘I cannot let you see it now,’ replied the stranger; ‘but you can think it over, and if you decide to exchange with me you can bring your presents, one by one, and put them in the hollow of this tree, and the day after the last one is put in you shall have this great treasure. Can you trust me to keep my word?’

"'Indeed I can, sir,' said Hans readily; 'but Herr Fritz is calling me. I—I think I will do it;' and then he hurried to his tutor.

"All through that drive Hans was very quiet. He felt quite sure that it was something very wonderful that the stranger had, or he would never ask so much for it.

"When his lessons were over the next day Hans went into his storeroom, and looked at all the pretty things. He wondered if his parents would like him to part with them; but he remembered that in the very last letter his father had said, 'Anything that makes you happy will please me'; so he knew it would be all right. At last Hans decided he would take a few of the things he could best spare, and, while he waited for the carriage that day, he ran over to the tree and dropped them into the hollow of the tree. Each day after that, for over two weeks, Hans did the same thing; and by the end of that time his room was nearly bare.

"As he parted with his property Hans grew strangely happy, and his longing for the gift increased. Many things he had once valued highly seemed foolish and trifling compared with this wonderful unknown gift that was soon to be his.

"On the day when he put the last of his treasures into the tree Hans' eagerness grew so great that he asked his tutor if he might stay at home instead of going for a drive, and as Herr Fritz had letters to write he was quite willing. So Hans sat up by the big gate to watch for the stranger.

"It seemed a long time, but at last he saw the tall figure of the stranger in the distance, and before very long he was close to the gate; but little Hans' heart sank within him—both hands were empty, and he felt sure no pocket could hold such a prize as he expected.

"The stranger knew what he was thinking. 'Let me in,' he said kindly, 'to show you your present.' So Hans' fear vanished, and he opened the gate.

"'Is it in your pocket?' he asked, as the stranger came down the steps.

"'No,' answered his strange friend, smiling; 'it is in these very grounds.'

"'Indeed, sir, you are mistaken,' said Hans, 'I know every step from end to end, and there is nothing at all like what I hoped you would bring me.'

"'Well, come and see,' was the answer.

"And afterwards Hans remembered with surprise how well the stranger knew his way. When they reached the last step they were on a large sweep of green lawn, and at the other end was a group of shade trees and shrubs. Here the stranger paused for a moment; then he drew aside the drooping branches.

"'Look!' he said to Hans.

"Hans peered through, and saw—what? Lying curled up on the grass, with no pillow save his own bare arm, lay a little child fast asleep. His sunny hair lay in soft curls over his head, his face was fresh and sweet, and as Hans watched him his eyes filled with tears of gratitude and joy.

"'Are you really going to leave him with me,' he asked the stranger, 'to love and play with?'

"The stranger smiled, but did not answer, for at that moment the little boy sat up, rubbed his eyes and looked about. He did not seem in the least surprised, but came over to Hans and put his soft little hand on the boy's sleeve.

" 'I like you, big boy,' he said in a winning, childish voice. I think I will stay and play with you always, and you will be good to me, won't you? "

" 'Good to you!' said Hans, in an awed voice; 'I will guard you with my life.'

" 'Are you satisfied with your bargain?' asked the stranger.

" 'Oh, sir,' said Hans, 'he is worth a hundred times more than everything else I ever had.'

" 'That is true,' replied the stranger, 'for I found among your so-called treasures several very disagreeable little people. Discontent, impatience, idleness, and a little fellow called grumble, who is never satisfied.'

" 'I am so sorry, sir,' said Hans, 'but though I knew they were there, I never cared for them, and I would have sent them away if I had known how.'

" 'Well, this little boy will show you how,' answered the stranger kindly, 'they never come near him, for his name is "Love-Joy."'

" 'You are very good to let me have him,' said Hans, gratefully, 'I don't know how to thank you.'

" 'Don't try,' said the stranger, 'be good and happy,' and when Hans looked round again he and "Love-Joy" were alone.

"When Hans went into his store-room that night

he found it swept and cleaned, for, as the stranger had said, there was no room for 'Love-Joy' and the other things too."

"So that is the end?" said Jack, when Uncle Dave left off speaking. "Why didn't it say how they played together, and what Hans' father said when he came home?"

"They left that to your imagination, like those old stories with blanks for the readers to fill in—"

"I wish we could find that little boy," said Isabel. "We'll look in the woods."

"You forget," replied Gordon, "the little boy said he would stay with Hans a-l-w-a-y-s."

"I don't think he is very far from any of you," said Uncle Dave, "and I am sure the weather has been taking a lesson too. It does not rain a drop. Gordie, I wish you would bring my coat, I must be off. You will all have a splendid time this afternoon."

"Yes, Uncle, but I do wish you could c-o-m-e with u-s," said Gordon.

"I wish so too," said Uncle Dave, laughing, "but I have t-o w-o-r-k very hard the rest of the d-a-y."

THE END.

A Story told by a Kite.

I am only an old, tattered, worn-out, paper kite, and yet, as I sit here, day after day, in this dark corner of the lumber room, I often wonder if there are many people who know as much of the world as I do. No, Friend Catapult. You may have sent stones great distances—even into far lands—but you did not go with them. What I know I saw for myself. I remember quite well the day I was made. A big boy came over to visit his little friend, and when he saw what a nice breeze there was he said, "Suppose I make you a kite, Phil, and we'll see how high it will go."

So he got paper and paste-pot, and cane for the frame, and I soon began to grow very handsome. When I was quite ready, they took me out to a large field at the back of the house, and the big boy gave the ball of string into Phil's hand and told him to "hold tight." Up! up! I went, till I could just see them, like specks in the distance. I went quite easily till the last of the string was unwound, and then I felt sure they were trying to draw me back. But I had not seen enough of the blue sky or the trees yet. So my friend Breeze helped me, and I gave a terrible tug and got free. On I went, over housetop, above the trees for a long, long way, till Breeze told me that as he had a little work to do on the lake he would leave me for a time and call for me on his way

back. I was quite satisfied, for I had seen a long way down a pretty farmhouse, and as I love children, I wanted to see if there were any there. So Breeze let me softly down. I have a great respect for Breeze; he is so gentle. He has a cousin called Wind, who does everything so roughly that you never know where you are going till you get there.

The farmhouse looked even prettier when I reached it. There were roses and carnations, sweet-smelling thyme, and other flowers outside, and in the kitchen and dairy the sun was kissing the pots and pans so fondly that they shone like silver and gold.

There was an old lady standing at the kitchen table making pies, and just as I came over the housetops, a little boy, with a face none too clean and very dusty clothes, rapped on the kitchen door. The old lady looked up. "What do you want?" she asked.

"Some work to do," replied the little boy. "I don't care what it is if only I can earn my living."

"You don't look big enough to do very much," said the old lady. "You will have to see the master about that, but if you like to go to the pump outside and wash your face and hands I will give you something to eat. I daresay you are hungry; boys nearly always are."

The boy said "Thank you," in a very pleased tone, and in a few minutes came back, looking much better.

The old lady had put a large jug of milk and some bread and butter and cakes on the table; and to see that boy eat you would have supposed that he had not had breakfast for about three days.

Presently the old lady said, "I can hear the master now, I will tell him you would like to see him."

She went away and came back in a few minutes to tell the boy to go with her. I had to ask Breeze (who had just come back) to help me round to the other side of the house to find out where they went, but at last I saw them all three in a room with a number of books in it, a library I believe they call it. There was a very kind looking gentleman sitting in a big chair at the table. He told the little boy to sit down. The old lady went out and closed the door."

"No, Catapult, I cannot begin to tell you all they said; it would take far too long. I make it a rule not to talk after nine o'clock at night. All respectable people should be in bed by that time, so I shall have to 'cut it up' as the editors say, which really means put it in very few words. This little boy had come from a city a long way off, because he had heard that the country was a very beautiful place, and he could not see why he and so many other children should have to live in such a crowded place when there was so much room in the country. He also told the gentleman that he thought the flowers and fields and trees were meant for everyone to share and love. He said he wanted to work and earn money so that he could build a large house for the little children to live in till they were old enough to work for themselves. The gentleman seemed very pleased. He told the boy (whose name was Donald) that he would give him work, and help him as much as he could. But he told

him, too, that he could not build the house till he had gone up a tall ladder, and he could not reach the top of the ladder all at once, but must take one step each day. He did tell Donald the name of each step, but I have forgotten. You know, a kite hears so many things that he cannot be expected to remember them all, but I believe the first step was called Obedience.

"Well, the gentleman took Donald to town the next day and bought him some nice, tidy clothes, and every day after that he took him in the library for one hour and taught him many things; then Donald worked very hard the rest of the time. He did not half work, as I have seen some little boys do, but he did everything as though he loved it. And after a while he bought bricks for his house with the money he earned, and I believe he always thought of that more than any other thing.

"Yes, Friend Catapult, the house was built. My dear friend Breeze and I went over to see it. It was a large, beautiful house, with gardens and trees. Many little children lived there, and I noticed they were very happy, for each child had a garden which he tended and weeded very carefully, and every time a child pulled up an ugly weed and made room for a beautiful flower the others seemed as glad as if it had been his own. No, my friend, not any more to-night. I hear the clock striking nine. Indeed, you are wrong, that is not all, nor one hundredth part of all I know. Another day I will tell you something else. Good-night!" But the Catapult lay awake quite a long time, thinking over what he had heard.

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